

THE CHARACTER OF TERRORISM:  
A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

By

MARTINUS ALCANTARA DO ROSARIO

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Thesis Approved:

Dr. Stephen Nemeth

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Thesis Adviser

Dr. Peter Rudloff

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Dr. Alex Greer

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Name: MARTINUS ALCANTARA DO ROSARIO

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Abstract: Terrorism has long been studied through both a political and economic lens when examining the organizational behavior of terrorist groups. The longevity of these groups is a fairly new area of the literature and what facets of society impact the duration of the groups. This research proposes a cultural lens to examine the longevity of terrorist groups. Drawing upon Geert Hofstede's dimensionalized cultural variables, which identify six different facets of culture, this study aims to find out if culture impacts the longevity of terrorist groups. Taking a quantitative approach the research utilizes a survival model analysis in order to identify the significant variables impacting group longevity rates. Several cultural dimensions are found to be significant in influencing group longevity, highlighting the exploratory nature of this study. This study offers a groundwork study to expand on for further research to explore the relationship between terrorist group behavior and cultural influences. Limitations and further research suggestions are highlighted.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Around the world, the duration of terrorist groups has varied considerably. In Brazil, the Vanguarda Armada Revolucionaria Palmares (VARS) lasted only four years (Jones and Libicki 2008). In Nigeria, the Odua Peoples' Congress group lasted 13 years, the Filipino group Kabataang Makabayan lasted 44 years, Ireland's Irish Republican Army (IRA) lasted 86 years, and the American Ku Klux Klan has lasted for more than 140 (Jones and Libicki 2008). While groups and countries vary considerably, which perhaps accounts for much of this variation, there exists many states that appear similar – and thus equally likely to support a terrorist organization – yet in one a terrorist group endures and in the other it quickly fizzles out. This variation amongst seemingly equal states leads to the puzzle - why do some groups last longer than others?

As an illustration, I use Brazil and Argentina. Both states have fairly similar Polity (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2017) scores – 8 for Brazil and 9 for Argentina - making them both democracies.<sup>1</sup> They both have similar government and legal structures; each are presidential republics with civil law legal systems (Osiel, 1995). Economically, both states have national income averages that fall in the middle tier and both states have experienced terrorism in the past (Jones and Libicki 2008)

Given these similarities, they demonstrate interesting differences between their terrorist groups. For Brazil – as stated above – the Vanguarda Armada Revolucionária Palmares (VARS) organization only lasted for four years. In Argentina, the People’s Revolutionary Army lasted for 17 (Jones and Libicki 2008). Both groups had similar membership sizes (in the hundreds), were both left-wing, and had the same end goal of regime change (Jones and Libicki 2008). How is it that two groups in seemingly identical states, with identical group characteristics, last for such drastically different times?

While there has been a growing amount of research conducted on the factors that cause groups to endure and decline (Crenshaw 1991; Vittori 2009; Miller 2012); the literature remains limited. First, much of the research remains rooted in explanations of a group’s activity such as number of attacks, targets, and types of operations (Vittori 2009). Second, of the limited amount of work directed toward group survival, it remains focused on common political science variables such as a state’s economy or regime type (Crenshaw 1981; Ross 1993). I argue that the key to this mystery may not simply lie in a state’s structural variables like those discussed above, but rather in its cultural infrastructure. In particular, I argue that state-level culture is reflected within

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<sup>1</sup> Both scores are for 2016. Both countries have had a similar history of non-democratic governance. Each became a democracy, at least according to Polity standards, by the mid 1980s.

organizational processes; groups embody their society's cultures and these cultures may be helpful or ruinous to an organization's lifespan.

My study uses Hofstede's (1983) Cultural Dimensions Theory, to explore how a state's socio-cultural environment affects the longevity of a terrorist organization. In particular, I examine six different variables for culture and I assess their impact on group longevity. The six variables that I use are: 1.) the Power Distance Index which measures the distribution of power and inequality of a state's culture, 2.) the Individualism vs. Collectivism dimension which measures the social framework of groups 3.) the Masculinity vs. Femininity dimension which examines the learned behavioural characteristics of individuals within a state and how they manage conflict and competition within a group. 4.) the Uncertainty Avoidance Index which evaluates a state's overall level of traditionalism; 5.) the Long-Term vs Short-Term Orientation dimension, which examines the habits of how groups prepare for future change and advancements in society and 6.) and the Indulgence vs. Restraint Index – which measures the extent of self-gratification.

This type of analysis, while unorthodox, is important for a number of reasons. First, looking at culture and organizational processes provides a new level of insight. The individuals who make up terrorist organizations are products of their respective cultural and organizational environments. This creates more variation that cannot be seen when doing state-level analyses. This allows us to better understand group duration. Second, by examining groups using culture, we can better understand the underpinnings of group behavior and potentially shed light on how some groups can operate successfully while others do not. Additionally, this type of analysis can open up the doors for further research and more in-depth analysis on cultural dimensions to gain a better understanding how culture plays a role in the operations of terrorist groups.

I am careful to note that my analysis does not make a claim about the superiority or perceived dangers of one culture over another (see Huntington 1996; for a contrasting view see Said 2001,

Berman 2003). In fact, each state's culture probably contains features that both aggravate *and* reduce the threat of terrorism. Understandably, this means that not many scholars have attempted to do an analysis of this sort (although see Chomsky 2015; Arena and Arrigo 2005; Mutua 2002). By using a theory that operationalizes aspects of culture for quantitative analyses, I am merely evaluating whether some cultural components have an effect on group longevity and not making a normative judgement about individual cultures. This study will take a quantitative approach to see if culture affects group longevity. I will begin my research by analyzing the literatures on terrorism as well as culture. After establishing this foundation, I will develop my theory. I note that state culture impacts organizational culture and that the six components of Hofstede (1983) have different effects on group longevity. I then proceed into the research methods. In order to test my hypotheses relating culture to organizational longevity, I run a Cox Proportional Hazards Model (Cox 1972, 1975). After running my models and compiling the results, I will discuss my findings. Lastly, I will provide potential research suggestions and discussion regarding my findings' impact on policy.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section will look at the multiple factors that play a role in terrorist group longevity. First, I discuss the literature on the definition of terrorism. It is important to discuss the different definitions of terrorism because it allows us to determine what does and does not constitute a terrorist organization. Second, I explore the various causal mechanisms related to the occurrence of terrorism. Third, I discuss organizational explanations for terrorist behavior, particularly work that explains the duration of terrorist groups. From there, I introduce culture as an additional explanation for why some organizations endure. Understanding why these groups endure longer than others is crucial in figuring out what policies can be introduced in order to

better combat the operations of terrorist groups. Policies that decrease group's abilities to endure in their respective environments, can potentially reduce the operations within terrorist groups.

### **Defining Terrorism**

In recent times, this form of violence appears to be a religious phenomenon that is often correlated with radical Islam. Terrorism, however, has long historical roots and has not always been associated with religion. The origin of the word terrorism, is in fact, attributed to the French Revolution (Giddons 2006). During the revolution, terrorism was not necessary a negative concept and instead was perceived as a way to maintain order (Hoffman 1998). The "revolutionary" definition of terrorism in regard to movements and violence toward governments shifted to representing violent anarchist acts that aimed to completely remove government authority. An example of this is the Narodnaya Volya (sometimes referred to as the People's Will), which attempted to assassinate Tsar Alexander II. By the 1930s, the word transitioned to a meaning that illustrated the oppression put on by governments toward their respective citizens. Stalin's regime is an example of what this new form of terrorism represented as he reigned with terror, oppressing the people of the Soviet Union (Hoffman 1998).

The concept of terrorism then shifted again during the post-colonialism era, most notably after the Second World War. States, once occupied by European colonizers, viewed their occupiers as weaker than they thought them to be, therefore the appeal to rebel became increasingly prevalent amongst citizens in these states. For instance, the National Liberation Front in Algeria was created in opposition of the French government. During the 1990s, there was a rise in terrorism associated with religious actors, thus merging the idea of terrorism with that of religious motivations that is seen today.

This complex history has made defining terrorism difficult. Weinberg et al (2004) discusses the complexities of defining terrorism. They explore the various facets of terrorism by using Schmid

and Jongman's (1988) survey where 22 "elements" were established to identify what defined terrorism. These elements were established based on frequency in other literature in order to analyze which themes were most commonly associated with terrorism. By doing so, the study provided a statistical occurrence of each element in order to establish a consensus of what the definition or "meaning" of terrorism was.

The responses provided a range of results that provoked more questions. One example is whether an attack on government can be considered terrorism like an attack on everyday people might be (Weinberg et al 2004). Another issue is whether states can be considered terrorists, some have argued that they can (Primoratz 2004; Stohl 1984; Blakeley 2007; Miller 1996). This is important because state-sponsored terrorism has some elements that are different than non-state sponsored terrorism in regards to their goals, recruitment, and tactics. While non-state groups may seek regime or policy change, state-sanctioned groups may utilize tactics in order to maintain control over the population and establish governments. This complicates the process of identifying groups because by including state governments in the pool of groups, the criteria used to identify terrorist groups no longer can be used equally among non-state actors and state-actors.

Ganor (2002) finds that it is almost impossible to unanimously define terrorism because of the normative implications that come with defining the act and actors. This is most similar to the statement that "One man's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter." This is problematic for an operative definition because it essentially makes the idea of terrorism subjective to the individual doing the definition. (Ganor 2002) This has been reflected in debates within the United Nations; states that are the product of decolonization do not wish to define movements for national liberation as terrorist (Mars 1975). This is not violence done for the sake of violence, they argue, but violence done to make people free (Fanon 1973). The ambiguity about who is and who is not a terrorist can also extend to a single country; Crenshaw (1981, 379) notes that

“terrorism occurs both in the context of violent resistance to the state as well as in the service of state interests.”

Even with these many problems, there are a few areas of consensus. Bjorgo (2005) notes the seemingly universal agreement that terrorism consists of the incitement of fear amongst the targeted population. He believes this can be universally agreed upon because groups that are considered terrorists tend to always commit some sort of violent act toward a group of people. Another area of consensus is that terrorism seeks some sort of political goal (Ganor 2002). The goals range from regime change to policy change to social revolution. One example of this may be al-Qaeda. At face value, the group may look as if it is solely religious in motive; much of their rhetoric is couched in religion. It’s true motive, as Wilkinson (2003) mentions, was to force the United States out of Saudi Arabia.

For the sake of this study, I use the definition offered by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (START 2017, 9); they define terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” Using this definition, I also define terrorist organizations as those who form together within a state and use violence in order to achieve their respective group goals (Phillips 2014).

### **The Causal Mechanisms of Terrorism**

Classic explanations of terrorism have typically focused on the environment that surrounds the organization. These explanations, called structural theories “posit that the causes of terrorism can be found in the environment and the political, cultural, social, and economic structure of societies” (Ross 1993, 317). These accounts vary widely; Crenshaw (1981) notes familiar economic and political conditions as well as more abstract concepts such as “modernization” and “facilitation” playing a role in the occurrence of terrorism.



The most prevalent structural explanation for terrorism is a country's regime type. Li (2005) discusses three explanations for the relationship between regime type and terrorism. The first explanation examines how there are various facets of a democracy that reduce terrorism. For Crenshaw (1981), this essentially means that in some states, there is an insufficient number of opportunities available for individuals to participate in government. This lack of opportunities leads to terrorism. In other words, this means that non-democratic countries are likely to see more terrorism due to their public's inability to register their anger in other, more peaceful, ways. Democratic countries, on the other hand, will see less terrorism. Any disagreement that the public will have with the government will be handled through the ballot box, rather than through violence.

It is important to note that democracy is not the good thing that it is often assumed to be. Crenshaw (1981, 384) notes that much of the then-modern terrorism that she was familiar with was a response to discontent with democracy, "many terrorists today are young, well-educated, and middle class in background. Such students or young professionals, with no prior political experience, are disillusioned with the prospects of changing society and see little chance of access to the system despite their privileged status."

A second relationship between regime type and terrorism is that democratic countries are likely to experience more terrorism than non-democracies. This occurs because democracies respect citizens' civil liberties. This allows terrorist organizations the space to plan and conduct operations without government interference. Schmid (1992) finds that civil liberties that are guaranteed as well as widespread increases the difficulty for the state's legal system to reprimand and convict terrorists as well as pursue perpetrators. This should lead to increased levels of terrorist violence.

The third perspective regarding regime type is that attributes of democracy can work at cross-purposes; voting decreases terrorism while respect for civil liberties increases it (Li 2005).

Institutional characteristics also have an impact; Reynal-Querol (2002) find that proportional systems tend to reduce the chance of terrorism compared to majoritarian systems. This occurs because “groups are significantly less likely to emerge in democracies that have a proportional representation system and higher levels of district magnitude” (Aksoy and Carter 2012, 181). By establishing the proportional representation system, there is more opportunity for individuals to participate in the democratic process. In majoritarian systems however, democracies will still experience terrorist groups more than other systems which still aligns with the second relationship mentioned earlier.

A state’s economics provides the second common structural theory for terrorism. Most simply, poor economic conditions may serve as proxy for feelings of dissatisfaction and inequality, which may lead to violence (Gurr 1970). This suggests that poor economics provides the reason why people will take action to address those responsible for their unequal position. Another linkage between economics and terrorism may simply be that terrorism pays. Becker’s (1968) model of crime suggested that participation in crime increases when the payoffs associated with crime are greater than those from legal employment. Participation in terrorism may then be way for disadvantaged people to subsist.

At the individual level, these theories have not been supported. Krueger and Maleckova (2003) find that there is little to no connection between the education level and poverty rates with the rate of participation in terrorist organizations. This suggests that there may be other explanations for why individuals join these groups that cannot be explained with economics. Broader country-level work, has also not been supportive. In one early study on the effects of economics on terrorism, Abadie (2005) found no relationship between a country’s per-capita income and its risk of experiencing terrorism. Instead, terrorism was influenced by the state’s level of political

freedom. A study by Piazza (2006) tested a broader range of variables, including GINI scores, the Human Development Indicator, and GDP and also found no relationship between economics and terrorism. Piazza (2006) also found political explanations to be the strongest; terrorism is due to the weakness of a state's party system and its social cleavages. One exception may be Burgoon's (2006) work. He finds that a state's level of welfare was negatively related with its risk of terrorism. This suggests that there may be some other influencing factor that play a role in a state's risk of terrorism that is not considered in the current terrorism literature.

Structural explanations may not always serve to explain the occurrence of terrorism. Crenshaw's (1981) category of precipitants provide for more specific and idiosyncratic causes of violence. This category essentially consists of a state's use of repression. However, not every state that has used repression has experienced terrorism as a result nor has every state that has not used repression not faced terrorism.

### **The Study of Terrorist Groups**

In many cases, structural theories are of limited use. Many times, terrorism is the result of the grievances of a small minority, rather than broad societal grievances (Crenshaw 1981). This means that we need to look at more specific, organizational, explanations for terrorism (Crenshaw 1985; Oots 1986, 1989). It is important to look at how groups behave as well as how they endure. This study's focus on group behavior will allow me to highlight a facet, culture, which is not commonly in the terrorism literature. I believe that culture can explain why some groups survive longer than others.

### *Strategic Model*

The strategic model for group behavior assumes that organizations abide by the tenets of rational choice. This means that individuals within the organization, "(1) possess stable and consistent preferences; (2) they compare the costs and benefits of all available options; and (3) select the

optimal option, that is, the one that maximizes output” (Abrahms 2008, 80). This results in organizations that have goals that remain fairly constant, commit acts of terrorism when no other alternative seems viable, and use terrorism because it is sometimes the most fruitful course of action. A strategic model of longevity would assume that an organization endures in so far that it provides benefits to its members that exceeds the costs of membership (Berman 2009).

Vittori (2009) examines how terrorist groups are able to stay active despite economic constraints. She finds that ideology of the group plays a role in duration of the organization. Terrorist groups must also be able to generate money, resources, and bring in recruits (Napoleoni 2004). These resources offset the costs that members face for being a terrorist. Kiser (2005, 30) discusses how terrorist groups finance their organization by having a “sophisticated terrorist network” consisting of various individuals who bring different levels of expertise to the organization. This means that groups have a variety of individuals who specialize in various areas who can support the operations of the organization. Using this, the organization can identify the best places to have members contribute in order to best realize their goal.

Economics also makes recruitment important for group survival, as it helps bring in new operatives to replace ones that have quit, been killed, or arrested. According to Vittori (2009, 445) “large, modern terrorist groups are complex entities that adopt advanced organizational models; they must utilize functional differentiation and recruit and retain members with specialized skills if they want to survive” (2009, 445). This idea that terrorist groups rely on recruitment to maintain their ability to stay afloat coincides with Brunsson’s (1985) research. He argues that individuals in organizations transform their responsibilities to help keep the organization operational. This suggests that terrorist groups restructure individual roles accordingly in order to remain active longer.

Regime type is another factor used to examine the longevity of these organizations. Diamond (1999) finds that democratization affects a group's ability to remain active. Basic freedoms, political transparency and the rule of law provide an environment for groups to remain active (Diamond 1999). These factors allow groups to remain present as well as it makes them more active because of the lack of civil constraints. Similarly, Vittori (2009) notes that terrorist groups last longer in democratic states because of the ability for groups enjoy certain civil rights such as freedom to assemble and protest. The work of Fleurke and Willemse (2006) confirms this. They find that terrorist groups in non-democratic states have shorter lifespans. This is because non-democratic states have more repressive regimes that limit the ability of groups to act freely within the state.

In sum, the strategic model for terrorist group longevity, suggests that groups endure so long as the environment is favorable to the group. These environmental factors include, economic considerations and political constraints; however, this model does not account for other factors such as culture. Because of this, the strategic model does not take a holistic approach to all the facets that affect the a group's longevity. Therefore, it is not a good explanation for group duration. The working and social relationship between members of the organization can influence whether or not individuals decide to remain in a group. These social interactions, which I will discuss later in the theory section, are influenced by culture which provides insight on how these varying group behaviors can influence the duration of groups.

#### *Natural Systems Model*

An alternative to the strategic model is the natural system model (Barnard 1939). According to Barnard (1939, 145) "individuals engage in a cost benefit analysis of whether to participate in an organization based on its personal inducements, which have little if any connection to the organization's stated goals." This means that individuals decide whether to be a part of a group on

the basis of how it will personally benefit them. The factors that are important to members then, are social networks, familiar ties, and personal affinity to other members of the organization.

The natural systems model has been used to explain the behavior of individuals within organizations. According to Scott and Davis (2007), there are two varying themes that can be seen in the goal of the organizations in a natural system. First, the stated goals and the “real” goal often do not perfectly align with one another. This is important because we cannot use the stated goal of the group as an explanation for its behavior (Scott and Davis 2007). This is also seen in their second theme. In this case, group behavior is also likely to vary from the stated goals of the organization; this occurs because there are outside goals that govern individual’s behavior within the organization (Scott and Davis 2007).

Scholars that adopt the natural systems model argue that other approaches too often treat all organizations as the same (Coving and Kling 1996; Stubbs and Cocklin 2008). This, according to many theorists distorts the true goals and nature of organizations. In other words, the strategic model – because it treats all organizations the same – may not be a good explanation for organizational behavior.

For Abrahms (2008), the various puzzles regarding terrorist activities such as the lack of compromise, anonymous attacks, and terrorist fratricide was best explained by referring to the natural systems model. Terrorists, rather than joining and staying in the organization because it fulfills some political objective, are part of the organization because they have, or hope to have, strong bonds with other members of the organization. This mirrors the idea that, in some instances, organizations will focus on surviving to the point that this preservation becomes the main goal of the group (Gouldner 1959; Wilson 1974). This activity is contrary to strategic assumptions. As for group longevity, the natural systems theory is more applicable because it

implies that groups change over time. The theory takes into consideration these groups change due to outside influence; therefore, individual behavior adjusts accordingly.

### *The Link Between “Normal” and “Terrorist” organizations*

While not common practice, equating the behaviors between “normal” and “terrorist” organizations can be insightful in regard to group behavior. Brannan et al (2001) find that there is a normative preconceived judgment in studying terrorism and they state that the term “terrorist” itself “encompasses an enormous and highly disparate collection of groups and individuals, ranging from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to Theodore Kazcynski. Simply categorizing them as “terrorists” does not make them remotely similar or even qualitatively or quantitatively comparable” (19). With this in mind, it can be beneficial to examine terrorist organizations as legitimate organizations, regardless of their violent behavior. By equating them to legitimate businesses, the field of terrorism research can then branch out into other academic fields and apply their models and frameworks to examine the operational behaviors of terrorist groups.

Zelinsky and Shubik (2009) created a centralization model that examined the resources and operations of business and applied this model to terrorist groups in order to illustrate the similarity between the two. By doing this they applied four different business operation models to examine various terrorist organizations. These business models are *Hierarchy*, *Venture Capital*, *Franchise* and *Brand*.<sup>2</sup> Each of these categories have characteristics that define the operational behavior within legitimate organizations. In regard to terrorist groups they found groups such as Hezbollah and the IRA to align with the hierarchy business model in that that these groups like other business have the ability to implement long-term projects such as training camps (training

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<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of the four business models can be found in Zelinsky and Shubki (2009) *Research Note: Terrorist Groups as Business Firms: A New Typological Framework* pages 329-330.

institutes/workshops for legitimate businesses). By examining terrorist groups through a different lens, a new approach can be taken when studying the operational behavior of these groups. Separating these groups as different from other organizations would present the challenge of measuring the difference, thus Zelinsky and Shubik provided a model that allows for the safe assumption that operationally, regardless of the goals, terrorist organizations are similar to other businesses. Now because we are examining them as parallel to other organizations, the relationship can be drawn between these groups and culture as defined later on in the theory section of this study.

### **Defining Culture**

First and foremost, culture is a complicated term to define. Edward Tylor (1871, 16) described it as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. While his definition is a common one, his is not the only well-known one. This occurs because culture is dependent upon the context of the observer. Humanist and poet Matthew Arnold (1869) referred to culture as the “human refinement of ideas” (Arnold 1869).

Secondly, academic definitions are affected by the scholar’s predispositions. Sociologists and anthropologists tend to view the construct of culture differently; Sociologist George Simmel viewed culture as “the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history” Levine’s (1971, 6). Anthropologist Franz Boas believed culture was based on the “lenses” in which individuals view their respective countries (Liron 2003). The sociologist’s definition of culture insists that it is formed by history, while anthropologist’s perspective see culture as something that is continually crafted by the individuals within society.



Despite these disagreements, there is some commonality. Across academia, culture is largely agreed upon to involve groups of people and their customs, beliefs, values, and their respective behaviors (O'Reilly 1989). Further, culture is learned; it is not a genetic predisposition that one inherits (Axelrod 1997). It cannot be passed down from parents to children and it is not exclusive to one individual. Instead, it is a group of shared beliefs and values held by the community or group of people (Hall 1976). With this understanding, it can be assumed that culture affects the everyday operations of groups within a society. These operations include interaction among family members, strangers, as well as behavior within in small and large group settings (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952).

To this end, I use Brumann's (1999, 40) definition of culture; it is "the forms of traditional behaviour which are characteristic of a given society or of a group of societies, or of a certain race, or of a certain area, or of a certain period of time."

### **Culture as a Determinant for Organizational Longevity**

While the natural systems model provides the best explanation for why groups endure, the rationale for why people stay within organizations, often at great cost, differs across society. A society's culture determines the value that groups place on social interactions. Culture has an impact on individuals within an organization in regard to their behavior, beliefs, and attitudes (Martin, 1992). Additionally, Schein (1990) finds that even though there are various types of groups within a state, the norms of that state influence the behaviours of these groups.

Schien (1996, 3) defines organizational culture as "the basic tacit assumptions about how the world is and ought to be that a group of people share and that determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and, their overt behavior.". He also believes that culture cannot necessarily be categorized in its entirety and instead, can only be categorized in part. Additionally, in order to understand organization behavior, Schein (1990) believes that culture is crucial to developing a

full understanding of organizations, because of its power to essentially determine whether or not an organization is successful and last long versus one that falls apart.

Culture according to Schein (1990) can be categorized in three levels. The first level “artifacts”, explores the visual structure and processes that can be identified, but not always understood. These are the aspects of culture that we can physically see such as the way a person act, talks or carries themselves. Secondly, are “espoused values.” These are essentially the goals, strategies, and philosophies of the culture. This aspect of culture explores the collective unit of culture, where people pass down their beliefs and traditions down through generations. Lastly, the “basic assumptions and values” are the center of the culture according to Schein (1990). These, he believes, are essentially the deepest dimension of humanity and guide our relationships, truth and reality. These are the subconscious parts of culture that controls how individuals perceive society and how they react to change.

This is further illustrated by Straub et al (2002), whom find that cultural “layers” affect the interactions between individuals within a group. Their study finds that culture is not a one-dimensional concept and is instead, the result of multiple facets such as ethnic, national, religious and even organizational ones. Their research found that these layers, do in fact contribute to the success of groups, resulting in the groups lasting longer in their respective areas.

### **The Relationship between Culture and Terrorism**

Evaluating culture’s impact on terrorism is difficult. The lack of an appropriate and precise definition of culture runs the very real risk of having the researcher rerun previously completed research. If culture is a shorthand for religion, previous work exists looking at the relationship (Rapoport 1984; Hoffman 1995; Piazza 2009). If culture means country-level studies, that too has been done (Freytag et al. 2011; Feilich et al 2015; LaFree and Bersani 2014; Chatterjee and Abkowitz 2011). This study explored the connection between country determinants such as

economic development, and the rate of terrorism. Or, if culture means ethnicity, work like this has also already been done (Vanhanen 1999; Basuchoudhary and Shugart 2010).

Although I reference these above, I want to discuss some previous work on “culture” and terrorism. One of the most common of these types of studies are those seeking to examine the link between religion and terrorism. Rapoport (1984) explicates three religious traditions to explore the connection between religion and terrorism. The Thugs of India engaged in ritual killings of seemingly random civilians in order to please their god. While they did mean to bring terror to specific individuals, the widespread fear that was generated, was unintended. The Assassins of the medieval Middle East, on the other hand, had political goals as opposed to the purely religious goals of the former group (Rapoport 1984). The third group, the Zealots (or Sicarii), aimed to induce mass uprisings in Judea in order to achieve their goal of casting off Roman occupation. The Zealots were carrying out, what they perceived to be the word of the God and doing so in a way that sparked a slew of killings.

Juergensmeyer (2000) also explored the differences among religions and the respective beliefs regarding terrorism. Specifically, his study illustrated the difference between particular religions and what each viewed as morally acceptable and what others deemed to be inhumane and terrorist in nature. More recently, Piazza (2009) assesses the role of radical Islam on terrorism. He finds that Islamic terrorism is not any more dangerous than other terrorist group ideologies and other ideologies such as nationalism or political occur at about the same rate as religious ideologies.

A second, and closely related concern, is that studies of the relationship between culture and terrorism can appear to be done to advance a particular – and odious - agenda. Specifically, this type of research could be used – if done improperly – to argue the superiority of one culture, religion, race, or other difference over that of another group. This type of work is, unfortunately, far too real. Mahmood Mamdani’s (2002) work *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political*

*Perspective on Culture and Terrorism* can be considered an aggressive attempt to pit two cultures against each other using charged language such as the statement “Even a political child knows the answer to Bush's incredulous question, "Why do they hate us?" When it comes to the Middle East, we all know that the United States stands for cheap oil and not free speech” (Mamdani 2002, 773). Another example can be seen in Patrick Porter’s (2007, 53) work where he examines the U.S. attacks post-Pearl Harbor and states “Japan had the “victory disease. It was a victim of its own previous successes against China and Russia and the rapid conquests in Asia” and the use of his verbiage can be taken as condescending making Japan seem as if they are too arrogant. Aside from it being simply bad science, this problem, and the outcry it attracts, is a reason why academics shy away from studying the two together.

Culture defines a state and people define culture. Social norms are set and people in those communities in more cases than not, fall in line with those norms; therefore, these individuals within these terrorists and or insurgent groups have the same cultural foundation as everyone else in their respective states that are a part of various organizations and or businesses. I provide in depth analysis of the political and economic structural variables in the study of terrorist groups in order to highlight the lack of cultural analysis. While culture is distinctly different than the political and economic implications, there is overlap in regard to the interaction amongst groups within these various economic and political systems. I discuss later in the theory section various dimensions that are used in this study, which mirror some of the political behaviors mentioned in the literature review. For example, participation in democratic process can be reflected in the power distance dimension. However, culture captures something distinct between states that is not easily quantified by political or economic variables. By examining this missing piece to the current literature, a better connection can be formed in order to see how culture interacts with the relationships between terrorism and the political and economic variables.

## CHAPTER III

### THEORY

For this study, I will be using the theoretical framework developed by Hofstede (1983). I use this theory because it offers a way to examine terrorist group behavior on a cultural level. and it does not reference particular races, religions, or ethnicity. Rather, state cultures are operationalized using six concepts (Hofstede (1983) calls them dimensions). Given that organizations within states are largely comprised of people from that state, we can assume that these attributes affect organizations too. Further, given that terrorist organizations share many commonalities with their peaceful counterparts, we can assume that these cultural dimensions that affect “normal” organizations will also affect the longevity of terrorist organizations.

### *National Culture and Organizational Behavior*

Culture impacts organizational culture in many ways. A state's culture influences facets of group behavior such as motivation, conflict resolution, organizational change and even communication. These influences in turn, heavily impact the behavior and culture of organizations (Treven and Treven 2007). By understanding how a state's culture affects the various facets of group behavior, a better understanding can be drawn in order to see the link between national culture and organizational culture. Treven, Mulej and Lynn (2008) found that a state's cultural norms, in regard to motivation, mirrored the motivation behaviors within organizations. They used Japan as an example and found that motivation through physical incentives or rewards was de-motivating to the population due to the collectivistic nature of the state. When examining organizations, they found an identical response. Their research finds the opposite in Slovenia and Croatia; motivating incentives within organizations mirrored the motivating behaviors amongst the larger Slovene and Croat population.

Gundykunst and Ting-Toomy (1988) examined how national culture impacts the conflict resolution behaviors within organizations and found a strong connection between the two. This research used Edward Hall's (1976) model of high-context and low-context cultures. He defined a state as either high-context or low-context and explicated the differences by the way people within the state interacted in regard to verbal and non-verbal communication. Using his model, Gundykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) essentially found that organizational behavior in regard to conflict resolution was parallel to the state's classification as high context or low context. For example, they found that organizations within a high context culture mirrored the behavior of resorting to either non-verbal or non-confrontational communication in order to resolve disputes. States with national cultures classified as low-context had organizations that paralleled the state's culture in their explicitness in communication and confrontational behavior. There have been

multiple other studies that found a strong link between state culture and organizational culture (Brislin 1993; Samovar and Porter 1991; Abbasi and Holman 1993).

It is important to understand how national culture and organizational culture complement each other when examining how culture may affect groups. Hofstede (1985) finds that national culture is centered on deeply rooted values. These range from what the respective cultures see as good or evil, safe or dangerous, as well as what is considered rational or irrational. National culture according to Hofstede (1985) is something that is learned in the early stages of life. Because of this early cultural influence, changing these beliefs are often slow and significantly complicated. As for organizational culture, Hofstede (1985) maintains that an organization's culture stems from the national culture. The organizational culture mirrors the culture of the state and, like the state, is difficult to change (Hofstede 1985). Because of this, organizational culture has many similarities that can be seen in a state's culture.

#### *History of Hofstede's Model*

Hofstede's (1983) model – called the cultural dimensions theory – examines the cultural behavior of groups within a state. This model was initially created from a survey used in research for IBM in 1985. Hofstede surveyed multiple organizations and businesses within a state in order to see how individual groups influenced a state's marketplace. This was used to explain why IBM and its subsidiaries had varying organizational cultures based on where they were located. The survey responses of all the organizations in a state were average order to create a profile for that state (See Appendix Figures 1 - 6). By doing this, he was able to identify the strength of each cultural dimension in a state. The six variables of the profile were then used to help establish a baseline to determine the likelihood that an organization would fail.

There have been various studies that have utilized Hofstede's (1983) dimensions to explain group behavior. Wood and Wilberger (2015) examine the relationship between the cultural dimensions and the success of multinational corporations. They find that when corporations fail, it is due to differences in organizational culture. Specifically, when groups lack the ability to communicate and understand one another the goal of the organization can be attained due to these issues. Additionally, Bakir et al. (2014) study the challenges that organizations face when operating in more than one country, thus creating conflicting viewpoints among groups with different cultural traits. They find that groups from cultures that are on either side of the dimension (i.e. one person from a masculine state versus a person from a feminine state) will have opposing views and compromise amongst them can be difficult at times. When there is a lack of compromise within these groups, they run the risk of dying off, because of the lack of cooperation.

Helmreich and Merritt (2001) and Eisend et al (2015) studied how culture plays a role in a group's duration. They find that groups that have more cooperation amongst its members – due to similar cultural values - will have a longer duration than those that do not have cooperation. Essentially, when individuals who make up the group have the same cultural characteristics, the group is able to function more efficiently and last longer.

While terrorist organizations are illegal, a case has been made that they are very similar to their peaceful counterparts. Oots (1989) likens terrorist groups to political parties which means that we can use the concepts originally found for the inception, recruitment, operations, and decline of these organizations to terrorist groups. Their core organizational behaviors are virtually equivalent to normal organizations, with the difference being mainly the ways these organizations attempt to realize their goals (Crenshaw 1985; Oots 1989).

Although terrorist organizations look very different from groups that are not, the role of culture is still likely to be very important. As a result, Hofstede's (1983) insights are likely to be of value



here too. Below, I discuss each of Hofstede's (1983) six dimensions and how they may impact the duration of terrorist organizations. While these dimensions measure different facets of culture, they are relative and in order to use them effectively, they must be done so comparatively.

### **Power Distance**

Power distance, according to Hofstede (2011), explores how power is distributed and how this distribution is accepted by lower-tier members of the society. The lower-tier populations of a state include the poor as well as its minority populations. Countries that are low in this measure, having little power distance, tend to favor equality and do not align with strict hierarchal structures, meaning they do not have defined "positions" within society. This, most importantly, means that in these states the ability to question authority figures is seen as appropriate. There also tends to be a free flow of information between groups, thus resulting in a more "free" state. Governmental procedures tend to utilize majority-vote models and political changes are peaceful and accepted by the state as a whole.

States that have high power distance refer to those who have strict hierarchal structures that create defined differences between the groups in society. For example, there is high political inequality in Mexico, which benefits the elite minority and these differences are not challenged and instead accepted (Robertson 2004). In other words, the political elite come predominately from the Mexican upper class, who control policy to keep this inequality in place, and the rest of the country is largely acceptant of this dynamic (Robertson 2004). The governments in these states are also likely to experience more graft and corruption because there are fewer norms regarding checks and balances (Mauro 1995).

In organizations, power distance is important because it illustrates the way leaders and subordinates communicate and interact amongst each other. Groups exhibiting high power

distance are made up of groups who obey leadership without hesitation. Essentially the individuals in leadership roles have unwavering decision-making power and the subordinates accept this difference in power (Hofstede 2010). As for low power distance, it is expected for subordinates to have a say in the operations of the organization, resembling a more equal distribution of power. These groups work by superiors and subordinates negotiating during decision making and the distance between them is relatively small (Xiaomei 2016; Podrug et al 2006; Mahbub 2017).

Assuming that terrorist organizations are the similar to other organizations (see Crenshaw 1985) – except for the means they use – terrorist groups in this sense can be akin to organizations in respect to cultural behaviors. Increasing power distance means defined roles are established between leader and subordinates. A side benefit of increasing power distance may be increased security for the organization (Shapiro 2013). As the power distance of a terrorist group increases, the influence on operations by subordinates decrease. The implications this dimension has on group success (longevity for the sake of this study) lies within the dimension’s influence on group cooperation among the leaders and the lower-tier members of the organization. With defined hierarchal roles, individuals within a high-power distance group understand their responsibilities and carry them out without questioning authority while groups in lower power distance have the opportunity to combat with their leaders. These differences equate to whether or not opposition is found in group behavior which can potentially lead to a group dying off faster, thus I predict:

***H1: Changes in a state’s power distance will have an effect on the duration of a terrorist group.***

### **Uncertainty Avoidance**

Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations” (Hofstede 2010, 10). Another way of viewing the uncertainty avoidance dimension is to think of the ideas traditionalism versus progressivism.

States that have high uncertainty avoidance are more traditional in a sense that there is little desire to change customs and practices. On the other hand, states low on uncertainty avoidance are not as bound to past practices and are more acceptant of changing these. These opposing viewpoints on these unclear situations can affect the state's ability to adapt and change accordingly with the international community (Kashima 1998).

In organizations, uncertainty avoidance is important because it illustrates the way members within the group react to change (Hofstede 2010). Groups exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance are made up of individuals who prefer to refrain from change in operations and rather maintain the traditional way of going about their responsibilities. (Hofstede 2010). As for low uncertainty avoidance, it is expected that individuals within the group will be more open to new practices and ways of conducting business. These groups work by members seeking out new and innovative ways to operate as a unit in preparation of the evolving marketplace in which they do business (Bellot 2011; Joseph 2009). By doing this, groups are able to stay up to date and maintain active operations in the marketplace, thus increasing their longevity.

As for the behavior of terrorist groups, they are essentially the same as those in other organizations when looking at uncertainty avoidance. The Irish Republican Army can be said to have had low uncertainty avoidance, as it was willing to embrace new tactics and new operations in light of changes in its environment (Jackson 2005). In fact, according to Jackson (2005, 97) "Initially, the principal military activity of the IRA was stone-throwing and sometimes petrol bombing. But as weapons became more available and the group evolved, IRA's repertoire expanded; within months, it included firearms and it progressed toward what would eventually become significant explosives expertise." This may have contributed to the organization's longevity. This is likely to be reversed for groups with low uncertainty avoidance. In these cases, the group's willingness to try new tactics is likely to increase their longevity. The implications this dimension has on group longevity lies within the dimension's influence on

group members' adaptability in the marketplace. Maintaining consistent operations, groups within a high UAI culture have outdated methods of conducting business, thus I predict:

***H2:** Changes in a state's uncertainty avoidance will have an effect on the duration of a terrorist group.*

## **Masculinity**

The masculinity dimension refers to when:

“emotional gender roles are clearly distinct—men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success, women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap—both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (Hofstede 2010, 140).

This dimension looks at how gender roles influence the cultural behavior of the state. Masculine states such as the United States are found to be more aggressive in social settings whereas states such as Bhutan are less so due to both cultures having gender influences that shape the way groups interact amongst one another (Thowfeek and Jaafar 2012). Krug et al (1998) country level analysis on crime rates, illustrated that crime rates are higher in states that are labeled masculine via Hofstede's model, which indicate that masculine states may have the tendency to exert physical violence in comparison to feminine state.

In organizations, masculinity is important because it illustrates the way members within the group act when completing assigned tasks (Lamoreaux and Marling 2012). Groups within masculine cultures carry out tasks in a more direct and aggressive manner. Groups exhibiting high masculinity are made up of individuals who are competitive in nature, and work well independently due to their one-way communication style (Parrish 2010). Essentially the

individuals in these organizations are assertive in interaction with one another and aim for personal gratification and not so much the gratification of other members in the organization. (Hofstede 2010 and Karber 1971). In more feminine groups, those with low masculinity, it is expected that groups aim to cooperate in order to promote a positive environment (Hofstede 2010). These groups are made up of individuals who are more modest in regard to self-recognition. These groups work by members seeking harmony when working amongst one another through two-way communication (Lamoreaux and Marling 2012; Taras, Kirkman, and Steel 2010; Parrish 2010). Groups who operate in way that resembles feminine states are better at maintaining relevancy and staying up to date within the marketplace, thus allowing them to last longer.

I believe that as the masculinity of a terrorist group increases, the influence on the group's willingness to cooperate with one another decreases. Cooperation is important for the survival of terrorist organizations because in order for these groups to work, members must be able to operate on one accord (Cherney and Murphy 2013; Criss and Cetiner 2000). When there is a divide among members, operations become inefficient resulting in the group dismantling. Organized groups, whom work with clear communications, understand their roles in the groups and work as a team, last longer (Shelly 2003). The traits of feminine groups are the ones that allow groups to last longer because they encourage communication and growth among members (Shelly 2003). Maintaining masculine behavior can lead to less cooperation amongst members in the group, therefore I predict:

***H3: Changes in a state's masculinity will have an effect on the duration of a terrorist group.***

## **Restraint**

Restraint measures the cultural tendency for an individual to seek gratification versus demonstrate restraint. Hofstede (2010, 281) states:

Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms.

States at the high end of this dimension are those who are more restrained in behavior. These states practice self-control, maintaining a “need” only way of operating. These states are typically consisted of groups who are very frugal and limit the number of extraneous niceties, whereas on the other end, states who have low-restraint are much more self-indulgent. These states follow a more “want” based decision making process and are no stranger to self-indulgence.

For organizations, restraint is important because it reveals whether members are self- or other-seeking. Groups with high restraint scores consist of individuals who practice self-restraint and do not let their personal goals cloud their business responsibilities. These groups stay steadfast in maintaining professionalism and keeping the mission of the organization on the forefront of the professional job duties. When examining found that individuals who work within an organization that have high levels of professional efficacy, tend to remove their own personal desires. (Gist 1987; Bandura and Cervone 1984). Group with low restraint scores are more likely to seek self-gratification. Essentially this means that these groups allow their personal goals influence their professional behavior. These personal goals sometimes align with the organizational goals; therefore, groups are more willing to let themselves pursue personal gain within an organization (Misho 2010; Schimmack et al 2002).

Terrorist groups are likely to look the same way. It can be understood that terrorist groups consist of individuals who can choose to put aside their own goals and pursue organizational goals or as well as those who seek to pursue their own goals separate from the organization's. This can be seen with the principal-agent problem (Lundahl 2004). Members that seek to achieve their own goals are likely to negatively affect the group since they are more likely to disobey the

organization or turn on the organization if given the right opportunity. The military coup in Pakistan in 1999 is an example of where General Musharraf decided to go against the government after the Kargil war (Bahadur 2001). People that put the organization's goals first are likely to benefit the organization, causing it to last longer. As a result, I predict:

*H4: Changes in a state's restraint will have an effect on the duration of a terrorist group.*

### **Long-Term Orientation**

Hofstede's (2010) long-term orientation dimension refers to the "fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards—in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to—fulfilling social obligations" (239).

These differences essentially indicate the preparation and decision-making culture of a state, such as the long-term outlook of China, which can be seen in the state's cultural practices. For an example, groups in China intensely plan ahead, and base their actions on the desire to maintain a stable quality of life in the future (Chan 1999). These individuals are more likely to make financial decision in preparation for monetary obligations they may have in the future. In short-term states, groups are more likely to make financial decisions that impact their lives currently, thus they are less likely to be financially mindful.

In organizations, long-term orientation is important because it illustrates what members of an organization believe to be most important. Groups exhibiting high values in this dimension are made up of individuals who prefer to pursue tasks that are going to prepare the organization for future business ventures. Essentially these groups have contingencies set in place for when obstacles or opportunities may present themselves (Lee and Dawes 2001). Alcantara-Pilar and Barrio-García (2015) looked at how groups in Spain vs the United Kingdom and discovered that groups in Long-term oriented groups were better at predicting and preventing problems, whereas Short-term oriented groups were better at addressing and resolving current problems. As for low

values of this dimension, these groups will only address current business endeavors and environments. These groups work by identifying potential challenges and figuring out how to successfully handle them in order to active in the marketplace (Nisbett 2003; Miyamoto et al 2006; Parrish and Linder-Vanberschot 2010).

As for the long-term orientation of terrorist organizations, I believe that this will parallel other types of groups. As groups become more long-term oriented, groups tend to task themselves with making decisions that will prepare themselves for any future changes in their respective environments, allowing them to be prepared for virtually anything. Looking at the Italian group Anti-Imperialist Territorial Nuclei for the Construction of the Fighting Communist Party, a group that is in a fairly Long-Term oriented county, it can be assumed that their planning ahead practices keep them alive (Jones and Libicki 2008; Hofstede 1983). Because of this, I predict:

***H5:** Changes in a state's long-term orientation will have an effect on the duration of a terrorist group.*

### **Individualism**

Individualism, according to Hofstede (2010, 11):

pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Individualistic states are made up of groups whom have a more "I" or "me" attitude which essentially means they focus on themselves while collectivistic states have a more "we" mentality (Hofstede 1985) Western and developed countries such as the Canada and Denmark tend to be more individualistic whereas less developed countries such as Venezuela and Ethiopia are more



collectivist (Hofstede 2011; Triandis et al 1988). Having a more individualistic culture makes a state much more competitive due to the groups within the state caring about achievement and success. On the other end, collectivism traits, makes a state more so concerned about internal problems because they care more so about the interworking's of their society (Markus & Kitayama 1991; Triandis 1990).

In organizations, individualism is important because it identifies whether groups use a teamwork or independent work styles (Bond 1986). Groups exhibiting high levels of individualism consist of people who prefer to work alone and are driven by their individual success (Hofstede 1985). This in turn is not good for the group because when there is a lack of teamwork there is also a lack of progression for the entire organization. (Jaspars and Hewstone 1982). With low individualism, it is expected that people within the group prefer to work as a unit and promote the success of the group over their own success of oneself (Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener, 2005; Oyserman and Lee (2008; Faltar 2006). Compared to individualistic groups, collectivistic groups have the advantage of being able to capitalize on team work extending the duration of the group. (Bochney and Hesketh 1994).

I believe that, as a terrorist group becomes more individualistic, it will have shorter duration. This occurs because the goal is no longer "we" and has now shifted to a more "I" perspective (Hofstede 2011). For example, the Latvian group Waffen SS lasted for less than a year, and they are located in a state that is fairly individualistic (Jones and Libicki 2008; Hofstede 1983). The implications this dimension has on group longevity lies with the group's ability to come together in a way that promotes and maintains consistent operations. Groups in collectivist cultures such as the Kabataang Makabayan, a group in the Philippines, which is considered a collectivistic state, have lasted for significantly longer than many other groups (Jones and Libicki 2008; Hofstede 1983) Thus I predict:

***H6: Changes in a state's individualism will have an effect on the duration of a terrorist group.***

When looking at the relationship between the dimensions and longevity, there seems to be some potential positive and negative relationships. Cultural factors have been known to influence behavior on an individual level, group level as well as a national level (Hofstede 1985). By looking at these dimensions, my analysis can potentially give insight on a pattern as to how culture effects group longevity among terrorist groups.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS

#### **Data construction**

To test my hypotheses relating culture to group longevity, I create a unique group/country-year dataset using Jones and Libicki's (2008) *How Terrorist Groups End* dataset.<sup>3</sup> This dataset provides information on 648 terrorist groups across the world. Each group has a location(s) - where its activities took place, a starting year, and (in most cases) an ending year. I converted this data, which had one group/country per observation, into group country/year data. This means that each observation in the dataset corresponds to one year in each of the countries the group was known to operate in. In conjunction with Jones and Libicki's (2008) data,

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<sup>3</sup> These data were originally compiled in the RAND-MIPT database.

I use Hofstede's (1983) Country Comparison Tool to assign each country with necessary cultural details. For states not included in this dataset, I consulted Khashman and Large (2012) for the remaining state scores. Khashman and Large (2012) used the same measuring methods, conducted by Hofstede (year) in order to study cultural dimensions for their study on organization behavior in Middle Eastern and North African countries.

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator that notes when the group "dies" or exits the dataset. A group exits the dataset upon the last known year it has conducted an attack. It is also important to note that because the dataset begins in 1866 and ends in 2006, there are a number of instances where the dataset ends before the group does – something known as right-censoring. The dataset includes 648 groups with 394 of them ending before the end date of the data set and 254 groups being right censored.

### *Independent variables*

For the independent variables, I use all six of Hofstede's (2010) cultural dimensions. The variables are specifically related to the dimensions discussed earlier: Power Distance, Uncertainty, Masculine, Restraint, Long Term Orientation, and Individualism. All of these variables are scored on a scale from 0 to 100. The use of a continuous scale, rather than a simple dichotomy, helps to capture the amount of cultural heterogeneity that exists in the world. This also helps reveal the degree to which a state may lean culturally. For example, a state that scores 5 on the masculinity dimension, like Sweden, is weakly masculine; while a state like Albania, with a score of 80, is strongly masculine. The scores for the Arab countries Sudan, Tunisia, Qatar, Oman, Yemen come from Khashman and Large (2012). Their study used the same dimensions and timespan as Hofstede (year); this helps to keep the scores consistent between their study and Hofstede's (1985) work.

### *Control Variables*

It is also important to control for other variables that may affect group longevity. To do this, I will be using a number of group and state-level variables. My first control accounts for the impact that regime type has on group longevity. Previous studies have shown that democracies are able to enact antiterrorism measures more frequently than non-democratic states (Wilkinson 2001). Kydd and Walter (2006) note that terrorist organizations should last longer in democracies. This occurs because democracies are limited in their ability to monitor and specifically target terrorist groups; while democracies have more leeway in retaliating against terrorist groups. I control for regime type by using a variable based on the Polity data (Marshall, Gurr and Jagers 2017), which simply indicates whether or not a state is considered a democracy.<sup>4</sup>

A second control is a state's level of economic development. This may be important for group longevity because, according to Muller (1985), economically poor states may experience constraints that prevent groups from operating since they may not have access to the materials they need to stay active. I control for this effect by including a measure for GDP per capita (unit of analysis is in dollar amounts). The information for this variable comes from the World Bank Development Indicators (World Bank n.d.).

A state's population (Gleditsch) may also affect group longevity (unit of analysis is measured in 1,000s). Research shows that states with larger populations are more at risk for terrorist attacks (Eyerman 1998). In addition to greater risk, states with a large population also harbor more terrorist groups and have a greater number of potential targets (Savun and Phillips 2009). Higher populations equate to more potential members and recruits, which may increase the groups duration since there are more active members equate to longer durations for groups.

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<sup>4</sup> Following past work, states are a democracy if they have a Polity score than exceeds 5.

The presence of civil war may also have an impact on group longevity. According to Findley and Young (2012), terrorism is more prevalent during a civil war. This occurs because groups are more likely to commit acts of terrorism due to the prevalent violence within the state. Groups may also last longer during civil wars because of the constant violence and the presence of recruits. Data for the presence of civil war comes from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Allansson et al. 2017; Gleditsch et al. 2002).

Next, I control for the size of the group, which varies between 10s, 100s, 1,000s in regard to how population is measured. The membership size may have an influence on whether or not groups have longer or shorter durations. Studies have found that group size does in fact, influence the survival of terrorist groups (Blomberg, Gaibullov and Sandler 2011). In particular, they find that larger groups have a longer duration. Data for group size comes from the Jones and Libicki (2008) dataset.

Finally, I account for group ideology. Many scholars (Rapoport 1984; Juergensmayer 2000; Piazza 2009) believe that religious organizations have the greatest potential for a long duration. This occurs because religious motivations can align both the individual member's and the group's goals into a common goal (Horowitz 2009). To assess this, I use the categories utilized by Jones and Libicki (2008): left-wing, religious, nationalist and right-wing. Rather than control for all four ideologies, I divide them as either religious or secular. Groups that are religious are indicated with a 1 in the dataset while secular organizations (those that are nationalist, left-wing, and right-wing) are denoted with 0.

## **Data Analysis**

Because this research seeks to assess the factors that affect the duration of a terrorist organization, I employ a survival model. Survival models allow for the analysis of time and its connection to certain variables that lead up to certain events like death, a common occurrence in studies of

biology (Allison 1995; Ezell et al. 2003). In this study, groups exit the dataset – or “die off” – with the last year listed in the Jones and Libicki (2008) data.

Because I make do not make assumptions about the baseline hazard of the model, I am utilizing a proportional hazard – or Cox – model. This model allows for the measure of time that leads up to a specific and discrete event. This is a useful model; Bartels and Brady (1993) believe that this type of model is most appropriate when aiming to estimate duration within a data set. For this study, I am using years as my method of measuring time, leading up to the dismantling and dissemination of a terrorist group. Cox Proportional Hazard models run analysis in where the discrete event can only be experienced once, therefore the model more so estimates as opposed to providing exact calculation of when a group dies off.

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

#### ANALYSIS

The results indicate support for three of my six hypotheses.<sup>5</sup> I use hazard rates to interpret the statistical effect of my variables. The hazard rate is “the exponent of the coefficient. Its deviation from the value of one indicates the percent increase or decrease in the likelihood of the incident occurring” (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003, 327). For example, in this analysis, this means that the variable for individualism suggests that as a country’s individualism score increases by 1, a group becomes 1 percent less likely to fail in a given year.

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<sup>5</sup> A quick refresher of the cultural dimensions can be found in Geert Hofstede’s *Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context* (2011) pages 9-16.



**Table 1: Cox Regression Results for Terrorist/Insurgent Group Longevity Rates**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cox Proportional Hazards Model</b>	<b>Extended Cox Model</b>
Power Distance	.99*** (.003)	.42 (.099)
Individualism	1.03*** (.004)	53.01*** (.000)
Masculinity	1.02*** (.003)	1.18 (.778)
Uncertainty Avoidance	1.01*** (.004)	1.40 (.640)
Long Term Orientation	1.00 (.004)	4.56** (.049)
Restraint	1.01*** (.003)	6.53*** (.001)
Longevity	.95*** (.006)	.02*** (.005)
Group Size	1.00 (.000)	.99 (.298)
Democracy	.57*** (.093)	1.56*** (.001)
GDP per capita	1.00*** (9.52)	.98*** (.001)
Population	1.00 (3.92)	.99 (.107)
Religious Ideology	.24*** (.044)	7.11** (.037)
Civil War	.99 (.015)	4.30 (.344)
Time x Power Distance		1.00 (.103)
Time x Individualism		.99*** (.000)
Time x Masculinity		.99 (.796)
Time x Uncertainty Avoidance		.99 (.649)
Time x Long Term Orientation		.99** (.049)
Time x Restraint		.99*** (.001)
Time x Longevity		1.00*** (.005)
Time x Group Size		1.00 (.298)
Time x Democracy		1.05*** (.002)
Time x GDP per capita		1.00*** (.000)
Time x Population		1.00 (.108)
Time x Religious Ideology		1.05** (.039)
Time x Interaction Time x Civil War		1.01 (.346)
No. of Subjects	638	638
No. of Failures	379	379
No. of Observations	6,563	6,563
Log likelihood	-2164.7406	-2133.6356
LR chi2	285.63***	347.84***

Note: Hazard Ratios with robust standard errors clustered on group in parentheses. \* Significant at .10, \*\* Significant at .05, \*\*\* Significant at .01

## Results

The results indicate support for three of my six hypotheses.<sup>6</sup> I use hazard rates to interpret the statistical effect of my variables. The hazard rate is “the exponent of the coefficient. Its deviation from the value of one indicates the percent increase or decrease in the likelihood of the incident occurring” (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003, 327). For example, in this analysis, this means that the variable for individualism suggests that as a country’s individualism score increases by 1, a group becomes 1 percent less likely to fail in a given year. The original model violated the proportional hazard assumption; therefore, an extended Cox proportional hazard model was ran to analyze the interaction between the independent variables in order to account for the violation in the first model.

Beginning with power distance, there is not a significant relationship with group failure. This finding, which does not support my hypothesis, indicates that a state’s power distance does not affect whether or not a group lasts long. This essentially may indicate that states on both ends of the power distance dimension experience groups that last for shorter and longer periods of time. Hierarchy, thus does not play a significant role in whether or not a group survives or dies within its respective environment.

The result for the individualism dimension was significant, supporting my hypothesis. The result suggests that there is a relationship between whether or not a group is collectivistic or individualistic. This means that as states shift to either side of the dimension, groups survive or die off at different rates. This finding illustrates the idea that groups that have a “we” mentality versus those who are more “I” oriented tend to survive and die at varying rates.

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<sup>6</sup> A quick refresher of the cultural dimensions can be found in Geert Hofstede’s *Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context* (2011) pages 9-16.

There is not a significant relationship between the masculinity scores and longevity, thus nullifying my original hypothesis. This means that neither masculine nor feminine dimensional behaviors impact the longevity of groups. This suggests that groups may fall apart regardless of whether or not groups exhibit masculine or feminine cooperation behaviors. While one-way communication may seem less effective as two-way communication, the other dimensional behaviors such as harmony and or competitiveness equally lead to success and failure amongst groups.

The uncertainty avoidance is also insignificant. This indicates that traditionalist cultures experience groups whom tend to either last long or die quickly at the same rate as groups within states that are progressive. Contradicting my initial hypothesis, this finding illustrates that social behaviors in regard to the tendency to accept or reject change to do not affect whether or not a group has the ability to stay alive longer. This may shed light on the willingness of groups to cooperate regardless of progressiveness and or traditionalism.

As for the next dimension, Long Term dimension the result was significant. This indicates that a group's ability to plan ahead and respond accordingly both have an impact on whether or not the groups survives. While that relationship may vary and swing one way or another, this backs up my hypothesis and sheds light on how planning behaviors within a group significantly influence the duration of the group, which may indicate what type of states will experience these groups at higher rates.

Lastly, the restraint has a significant relationship with organizational failure. This indicates that whether groups are either more restrained or indulgent, there is a significant impact on how long the groups lasts. This supports my hypothesis, illustrating that self-interest, can impact whether or not the groups as whole will succeed and manage to stay alive in their respective environments.

The control variables provide a number of different results. The democracy variable was significant, indicating a relationship between duration and whether or not a group was in a democratic or non-democratic state. This is in line with previous works (Schmid 1992; Chenoweth 2013; Wolverson 1999) on the link between democracy and terrorism - democracies provide a favorable operating environment because of their respect for civil liberties (Li 2005). Essentially, they are less likely to end the more democratic they are impacted by a state GDP. This is likely due to the construction of the variable; the results show the percent increase per a \$1 increase in GDP. This variable would have a larger effect if I changed units to thousands.

Group size was not statistically significant. This suggests, contrary to the organizational literature, that the ability for the group to remain active is independent of the size of the group (Sandler 2014). This is an interesting non-finding because terrorist organizations, like other types of organizations, should be sensitive to the free rider problem (Olson 1965). The lack of a finding does not suggest that these groups do not suffer these types of problems, but the fact that size has no effect on organizational failure is interesting.

Neither population nor civil war was significant, indicating no effect on organizational failure. Whether a group was religious had a significant impact on organizational failure. Groups that were religious, as opposed to secular groups (nationalist, left-wing, or right-wing), were significantly impacted in regard to success and failure.. This means that while the literature shows that the motivation for terrorism may increase with religious ideology, the ability for these groups to successfully stay alive is limited compared to groups that have no religious motivations. Religion does in fact evoke intense emotions, therefore, this may illustrate that religion within an organization can have significant negative effects on group morale and cooperation (Horowitz 2009).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has sought to explore the potential reasons why some groups last longer than others. Contrary to previous studies that have used traditional structural variables such as state-level variables, the ideology of the group, or its goals to examine the longevity of the group, this study has utilized culture as its main explanatory factors. It has found that the culture of a state does, in fact, impact these groups ability to remain active within their respective states. This study, suggests that there may in fact be a connection between culture and terrorist group longevity. While the findings are not strongly directional, indicating either positive or negative relationships, the results still illustrate that there is an influence on group longevity. Hierarchy, gender behaviors social traditionalism have no impact on the duration of these groups. Cooperation, planning and goal seeking behavior seem to be the cultural influences that have the significant impact, illustrating how these implications can result in groups that last extended periods of times versus groups that have shorter lifespans. This further shows that while terrorist groups have their own religious and or political goals, they are still groups influenced by state culture, therefore bridging the gap between terrorist groups and “legitimate” groups. The state culture influences the behaviors of the people within the groups and Brannan et al (2001) say it best when they state that “terrorism is in fact a social phenomenon, and “terrorists” are human beings and groups of human beings with views and convictions, forming parts of human society regardless of political or religious convictions” (19).

### **Caveats**

This approach should not suggest that some cultures are more prone to terrorism than others. This type of rhetoric is already all too prevalent; most notably in the affinity of some media outlets, pundits, and “think tanks” to blame Islamic culture as a whole for acts of terrorism (Saeed 2007; Powell 2011; Karim 2003; Poole 2002; Akbrsadeh and Smith 2005). Powell (2011) examined how Islam has developed a negative connotation since the attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Additionally, Muslims are targeted often times by the media and pundits due to the lack of

understanding of how true religion operates, even years after the initial 9/11 attacks (Yusof et al 2013). Instead, this approach discusses a better approach by standardizing culture, and removing any religious, ethnic or racial influences. Removing these factors allows for a more universal approach to analyzing this relationship and eliminates the ability to pinpoint an individual culture or state as being more prone to terrorism.

### **Strengths**

I believe this study can begin the discussion and open the gate into more studies on the role of culture on terrorism. Political science has a hard time with culture; it is often used qualitatively (Smollan and Sayers 2009; Alalassuutari 1995; House et al 2004; Van Dyck et al 2005) and, as a result, has been very difficult to operationalize. Others believe that culture is dangerous because it has the potential to veer political science into discussions about one culture versus another (Sheppard 2006; Ehrlick and Liu 2002; Tololyan 2017). Still others believe it is not important, as it is largely covered by other state-level variables (Beugelsdijk et al 2015). The method in this study eliminates the ability to exclusively pit one culture or state against another in regard to the conduciveness of a state's environment for terrorist groups. Each state, essentially has cultural characteristics which both help *and* hinder the longevity of terrorist organizations.

Neglecting culture is detrimental to political science; people are the very construct of political science. To deny culture denies people; it furthermore deprives political science work of context. A deeper understanding of political science findings is forfeited for generalizability and our theories will have no true understanding of their social influences. By operationalizing culture in the way this studied approached it, we can begin to quantify a construct that is traditionally measured qualitatively. By tapping into culture, we can bridge the gap between political science and sociology as well as better understand the various intricacies of human behavior and group behavior, which in turn influences a state's environment.

## **Limitations**

This study also has some limitations. Terrorist group data is not always widely available for researchers. This means that I use a very limited set of groups through Jones and Libicki (2008); terrorist groups are largely covert and, in many instances, information on these groups are often limited if not classified or unavailable. Additionally, culture can be misinterpreted as defining a specific group of people on the bases of race, ethnicity or religion; therefore, it important to clearly define how culture is being operationalized. This way over generalization of a population can be eliminated.

It is also possible that the effect of culture may be overstated, as this study relies on a very limited set of terrorist groups. If these groups are sensitive to culture, but excluded groups are not, then this means that culture appears to be more influential than it actually is. By having more data on a wider variety of groups, then a better relationship can be drawn with more confidence. Another limitation is the lack of cultural data on Central African countries. This is due to the lack of information flowing from these countries as well as the general lack of formal research covering these countries in cultural sociology (although see Metcalfe 2006). The lack of cases has the potential to skew my study by not having an accurate representation of groups within the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region.

Regarding policy implications, this study may provide insight on how a state's culture may influence the behavior and actions of its terrorist groups. By understanding this, states have the potential to modify their social policies in order to possibly curb the duration of these terrorist groups. For example, individuals access to small arms and light weapons may affect how long groups are able to remain active, which may be related to cultures who are more indulgent (Oosthuysen 1996). By enforcing more constraints on access to arms, group longevity may

decrease due limited access to this one resources. While this may not make an immediate impact on the longevity of these groups, it has the potential to decrease a group's longevity over time.

Additionally, this can potentially help foreign policy by indicating the ways in which policy can enable terrorist groups across state borders. Trade practices in regard to the import and exporting of goods may impact how long terrorist groups remain active. Groups who are more long-term oriented as noted earlier in this study, prepare for the future in advance, and trade to gain materials for future use. Enacting regulations on trade practices amongst states, can slowly curb the access to raw materials that allow terrorist groups to operate within state lines.

Overall this study is exploratory in nature and begins to look at the potential impact culture has on group longevity. By taking an exploratory approach this study has the ability to adapt and change over time as more information is collected on terrorist groups. Additionally, this study can effectively establish a foundation to build off of in order for other studies to further expand the cultural implications. By gaining a better understanding of culture and the relationship with terrorism, other avenues of terrorist group behavior can start to be explored, to further analyze the impact of culture.

### **Future Research**

Future work on the relationship between culture and terrorism is important in order to better understand how these groups work. This type of study could be expanded to potentially look at gangs and cartels. While Jones and Libicki (2008) do include a few cartels in their data, examining these organizations in-depth can help scholars understand the organizational behavior of these groups. Terrorists are not void of cultural influences and do not act on behalf of uninfluenced socio-cultural behavior, so neither should gangs and cartels (Hagedorn 2005; Brenner 2011). This essentially could increase the amount of groups examined to ensure that culture is in fact a variable that does impact the wider success of violent groups within society.



By expanding the scope, culture has the potential to be more generalizable therefore taken into consideration by more terrorism scholars. Similarly, it would be interesting to examine the potential influence culture as defined by Hofstede, has on the group behavior of the military and law enforcement.

In addition to the research idea mentioned above, more research in how terrorist groups work as an organization can be beneficial to terrorism literature. The amount of literature available on the “business operations” of terrorist groups is limited and this study suggests that it may be fruitful to explore the organizational side of terrorism groups more than it has been thus far (Crenshaw 1985, 1989; Oots 1986, 1989; Phillips 2015; Enders and Su 2007; Diesner and Carley 2004; Demiroz and Kapucu 2012; Qin et al 2005). Potentially merging organizational and management theories with group studies for terrorist longevity or attacks may provide a more contextual analysis of how these groups operate and succeed as well.

Many states share similar cultural traits and can be on two different continents. Finding the thread of these similarities and weaving them together can produce a framework in which advancements can be made in the relationship of political science and sociology. While the two fields are often studied independently, the two are very similar in regard to their subject matter. While political science typically examines phenomena on a state level, sociology focuses more on group level (Harrison, Price and Bell 1998). Merging the two fields together can create a more holistic approach to understanding specific behaviors. This study essentially intertwines the two fields together to explore a fairly untouched facet of terrorism literature, resulting in interesting findings. While taking into consideration that there are outside influences that may not have been addressed in this study, a connection can be seen between culture and the way terrorist groups operate. Additionally, understanding the behavioral interactions between individuals within groups is crucial to understanding how these groups succeed. Hopefully this is just the beginning of researching the effects culture plays in the roles of terrorism. Understanding even more about

terrorism brings us closer to understanding how to defeat them and keep them from succeeding with their attacks on humanity.

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## APPENDICES

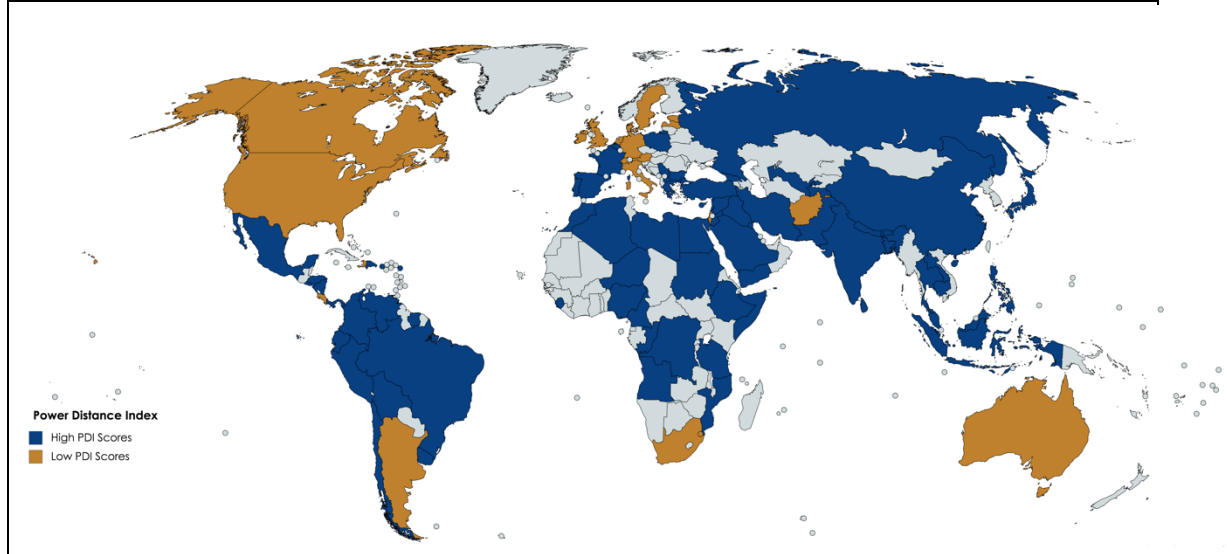
**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Longevity	6,739	25.57	23.43	0	140
PDI	6,739	60.56	24.20	8	97
IDV	6,739	41.25	23.75	2	91
MAS	6,739	69.02	23.29	0	98
UAI	6,739	66.68	19.28	23	100
LTO	6,739	36.62	18.36	7	88
IND	6,739	42.75	25.49	0	100
Size	6,739	1308.04	2917.43	10	10000
Demyn	6,739	.602	.489	0	1
GDP	6,563	9223.43	9699.19	199.01	43766.86
Population	6,720	124559.4	250150	399	1311020
Relyn	6,739	.213	.410	0	1
Civwar	6,739	.365	.481	0	1

**Table 2: States included in analysis**

Albania, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria , Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China , Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland , France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary , Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland , Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Malta , Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway , Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland , Portugal, Puerto Rico, Russia , Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Salvador, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland , Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Uruguay , United States, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tanzania, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom
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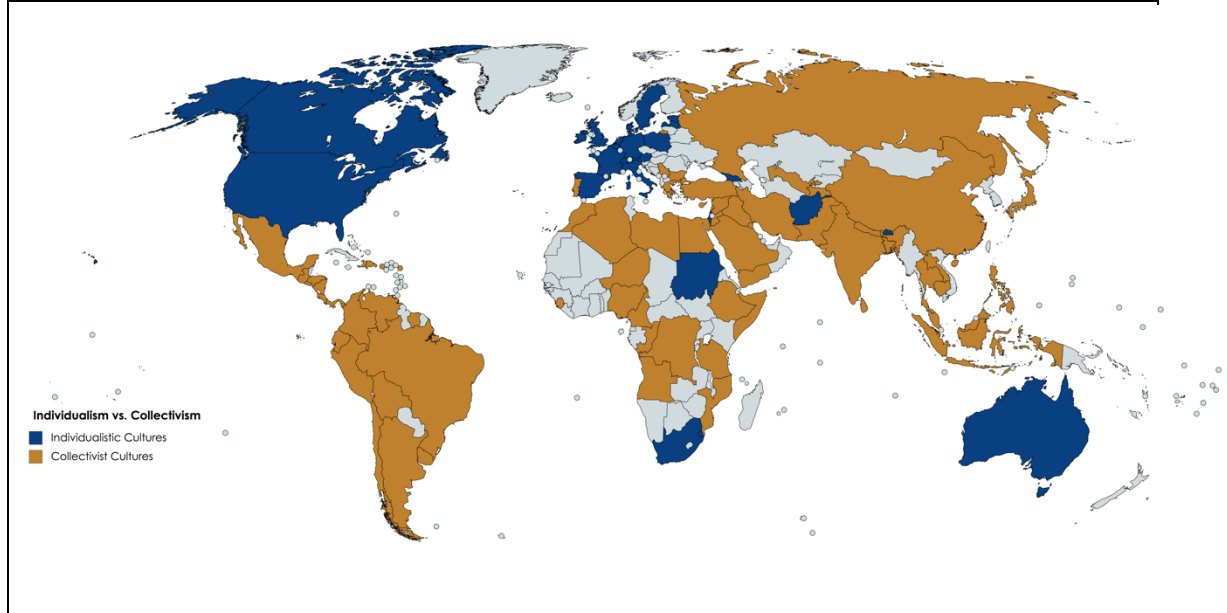
**Figure 1: Power Distance Index Score Dispersion Map**



Note: Scores derived from *Hofstede-Insights* Country Comparison Tool (2018). Arab scores derived from Kashman (2014).

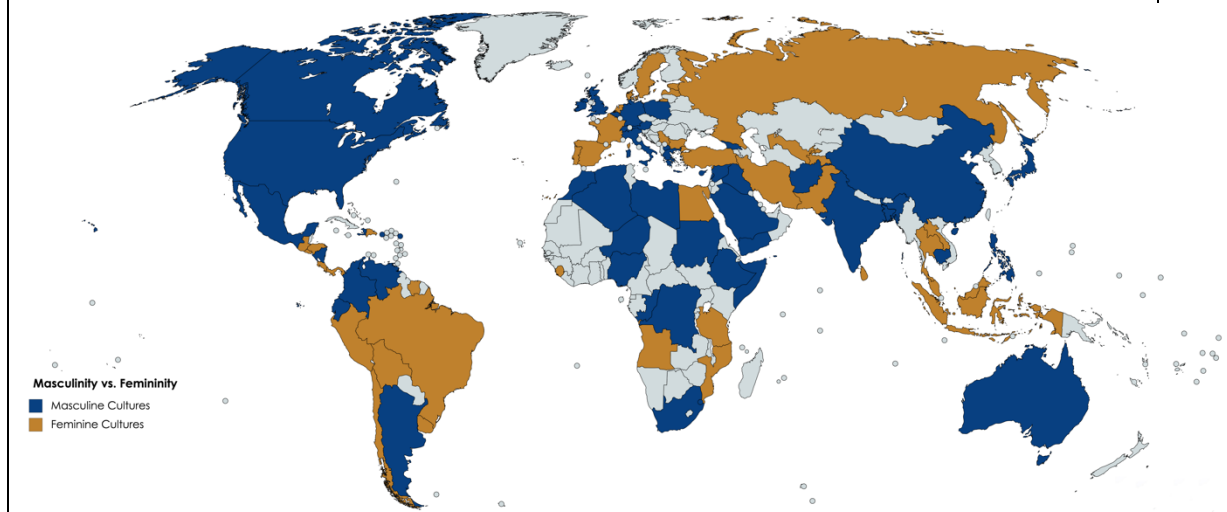


**Figure 2: Individualism vs. Collectivism Dispersion Map**



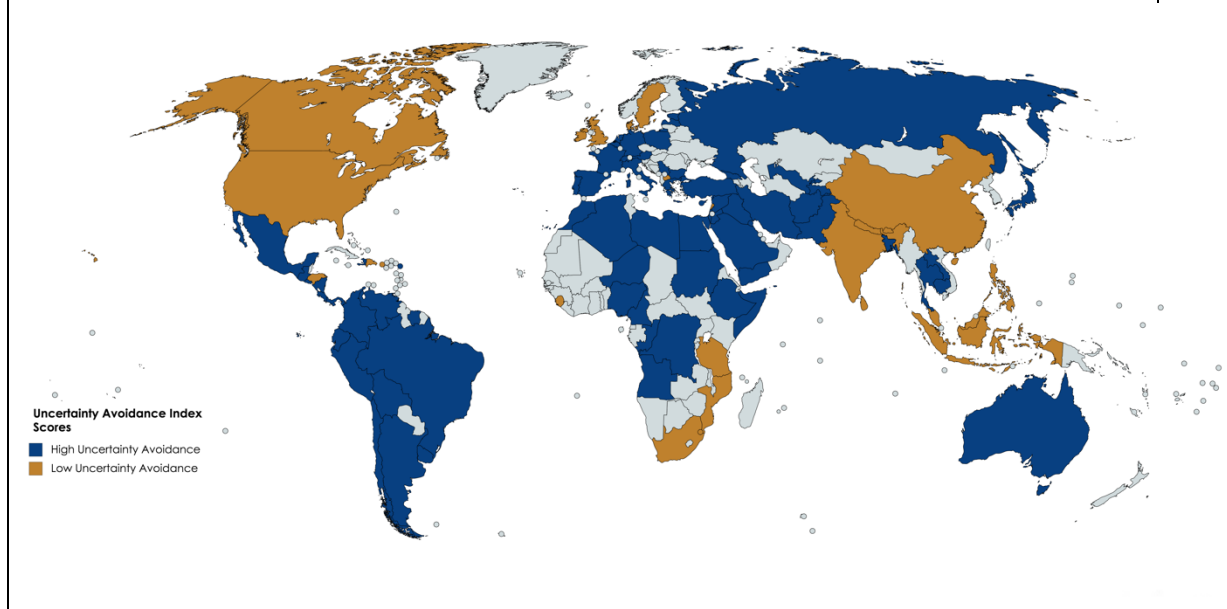
Note: Scores derived from *Hofstede-Insights* Country Comparison Tool (2018). Arab scores derived from Kashman (2014).

**Figure 3: Masculine vs. Feminine Dispersion Map**



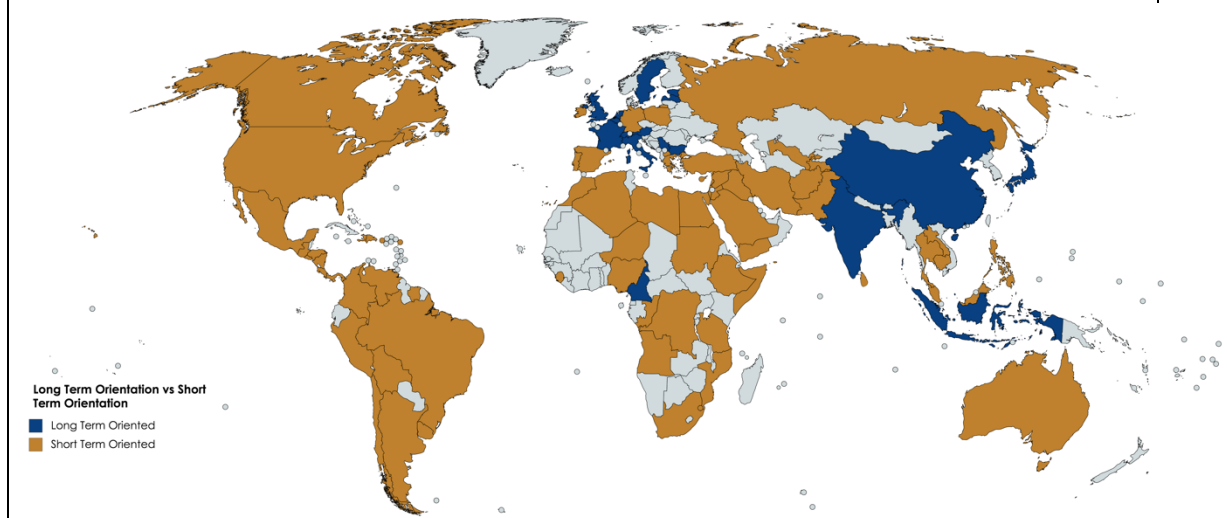
Note: Scores derived from *Hofstede-Insights* Country Comparison Tool (2018). Arab scores derived from Kashman (2014).

**Figure 4: Uncertainty Avoidance Index Dispersion Map**



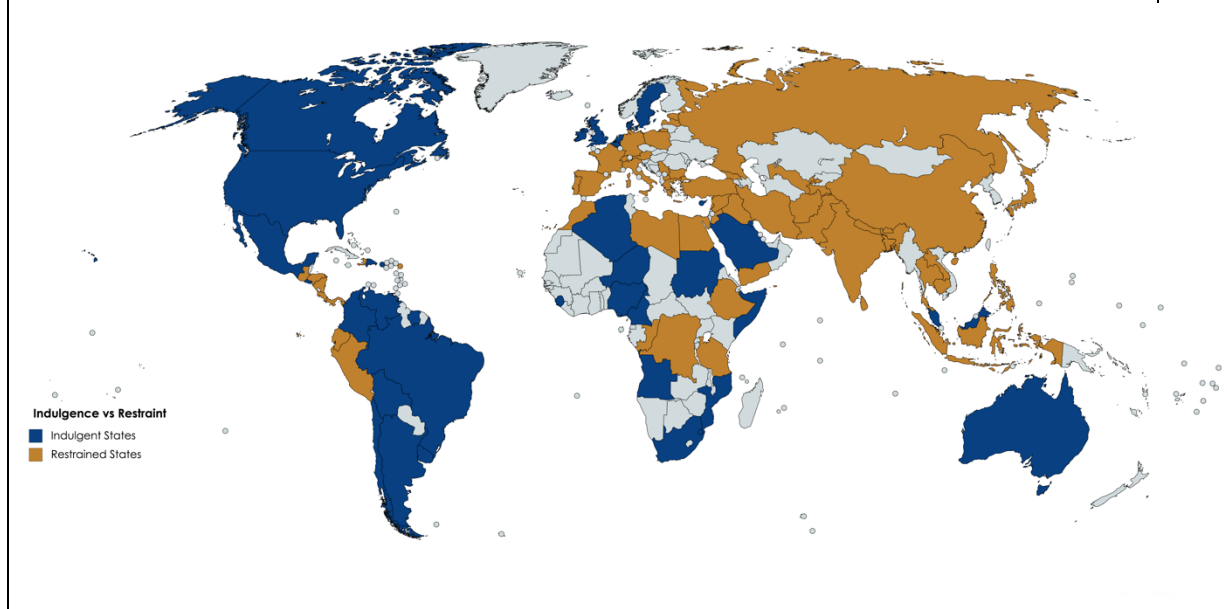
Note: Scores derived from *Hofstede-Insights* Country Comparison Tool (2018). Arab scores derived from Kashman (2014).

**Figure 5: Long Term Orientation vs Short Term Orientation Dispersion Map**



Note: Scores derived from *Hofstede-Insights* Country Comparison Tool (2018). Arab scores derived from Kashman (2014).

**Figure 6: Indulgence vs Restraint Dispersion Map**



Note: Scores derived from *Hofstede-Insights* Country Comparison Tool (2018). Arab scores derived from Kashman (2014).

## VITA

Martinus De Juan Alcantara Do Rosario

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THE CHARACTER OF TERRORISM: A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Major Field: Political Science

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in your Political Science at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2018.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in your Strategic Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma/ United States in 2014.

Experience: Communications and Marketing Residence Director

Professional Memberships: American Advertising Federation, Public Relations Society of America, Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política and the National Conference of Black Political Scientists.